

The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, September 4. 1694

Quest. 1. **D**iscussing the other day with a Quaker about Oaths, and telling him, I thought it very Justifiable to take one in extraordinary cases: He urged those words of our Saviour, as a positive Injunction against all swearing, Let your Communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil: Qu. What was the Design and Intention of our Saviour in this command?

Ans. Only to forbid the general practice of the Jews, which upon the most trivial occasion, and in their common conversations, used to swear by their Father and Mother, the Earth, the Sun, the Stars, the Heavens, and many other the like; which Custom brought their most solemn Oaths into less Reputation; for upon Extraordinary Occasions they used to swear by God himself. And 'tis no piece of Irreverence, but an Honour to God Almighty, in Matters of great consequence, to call upon him as a Witness of the Truth.

Quest. 2. Lying under some Engagements to a Woman in Flanders, not any formal contract, to wait some time for her, in hopes she would consent to marry me, I happened in London to fall into the Acquaintance of a young Gentlewoman, whose obliging carriage to me hath entirely won my Affections. She is one whose Fortune, Education, and Person, in every respect answers what I may pretend to: That which is an Obstacle to the Match, is the Engagement I lie under to the Gentlewoman in Flanders. The Information I desire in this from you, is, whether I can, with Honour, marry the English Woman, before I go again to Flanders, or the other, to know her Absolute Determination? And if I am obliged to go, whether I ought not to be plain with the Gentlewoman here, in telling her my present circumstances, lest by Expectation of me, (which nothing shall disappoint but my former Promise) she slight other convenient Matches now offered her by her Friends, which may displease them, and injure her own preferment.

Ans. If you don't go, you ought at least to send word to the Gentlewoman in Flanders, and desire her Final Resolution, telling her truly the Cause of it; and till you have done that, you can Honourably proceed no farther, having already made a little Breach upon Honesty, but in a case where you have so many Presidents, perhaps you'll have the fewer Accusations. To be also as plain with this in Town; and if she be worth the loving, your sincerity will do you no injury.

Quest. 3. I and my Father having made some Articles of Agreement, with another man, which we knew to be defective, according to the Law, though he did not, on purpose, that if we had ever any Occasion to make an Advantage of it, we might do it, believing that Fools were made for Knaves; but whilst my Father lived, he had no Occasion to put it in practice; yet afterwards I finding it not so agreeable to my Interest to perform Conditions, as to omit 'em, I made no account at all of the Articles; which obliged the other person to endeavour to compel me to it; but it proved, as I knew it would, unsuccessful, and I was by Law wholly freed from all Obligations. This is some Years since, and I very much applauded my own Craft, which procured me such Advantages, till a late dangerous fit of sickness set another Face upon things, and made me sensible I had done very ill; for which I am heartily sorry; but doubt my Repentance will not be accepted, without I give satisfaction to the other person. Now, though I believe him to be an Honest Man, he is not over-wise, and I should

be very unwilling to venture my Reputation at his mercy, this Affair being yet unknown to all but God Almighty and my own Conscience. I desire to know, whether it's absolutely necessary for me to do it? and if it is, what way I had best take?

Ans. 'Twould be well if from your Example, all Knaveish Men would consider, that though they may be cunning enough to deceive their Neighbours, they'll find some difficulty always to impose upon their own Consciences: That the Regret of that will one time or other, cost 'em more than all they gain by over-reaching others. And that when they put a Cheat upon any one, they do what will one day make 'em miserable, without a timely Repentance. You seem to be happily come thus far, and the next satisfaction to the never having done it, is to make up the Damage the wronged party has received, which Justice requires. And in your case 'tis most proper to be done by an unknown hand, since a Reparation may that way fully be made, without venturing any thing on your part.

Quest. 4. Whether Natural Religion (that is, where Reason only is the Rule of Worship) will allow a man to deny God, to escape present Death? I am apt to think it does, because I cannot see that God can be dishonoured by it, since the Idolatrous Action is a sign only of the Fear of Death, and not a Contempt of the Divine Majesty. But in Revealed Religion I believe such an Action cannot be supposed.

Ans. No, it will not, since to such God is Nature, and they being a part of it, cannot deny the whole. Besides, Natural Religion teaches the Immortality of the Soul, as is evident from the Writings of Plato, Epictetus, Seneca, Socrates, &c. Therefore there is the same Reasons, (though not so great) for a person in *Puris Naturalibus*'s not denying the Author of Nature, to lengthen an Uncertain Life.

Quest. 5. In one of your Mercury's you are questioned, Whether there is a World in the Moon? You answer, There's all the probability imaginable to believe it a World like ours; Which I admire, seeing Moses, in his short, but, I think, full Description of the Creation, does not mention Two Worlds; and from the 14th to the 19th Verses of that Chapter, I can see no probability that it is so. Query, Why do you now swerve from the Scripture, which you so often make use of to prove your Assertions?

Ans. Moses wrote only for this World, and therefore it was not necessary he should tell us whether there were more, or not: Besides, he says nothing that contradicts it.

Quest. 6. I am an Old Maid, which, you'll say, is none of the commonest Things to be met with, and have out-lived many good Proffers; but now one offers himself, whom I like, and I know he loves me well; His circumstances in the World are also good. My Parents are dead, but those of my Relations that are living, are against the Match; I know not why; and I am very unwilling to cross my Inclinations for a Whim; but have no persons Advice to take, therefore beg you would direct me what to do?

Ans. 'Twill be your best way, first, to consider whether your Friends can't give you any sufficient Reason against the Match; So much you owe to your own Happiness; but to them no more than the Civility of taking their Advice; And if they

I remain

remain Refractory, without any Cause; and you love each other, c^{ne} marry, and end the Dispute.

Quest. 7. *I have a Chamber in the Inner-Temple, but living mostly in the Country, left my Key with a person who lives there (and takes upon him to let and set Chambers) with Orders to sell my Chamber, if he could meet with a Chapman in my absence. He hath not only embezzled some part of my Goods I left there, but hath let my Chamber, at a Rent, without acquainting me with it, and took the profits to himself for a Year or more, when I am assured he had a Chapman that would have bought it, and given my Price, about half a Year since. If I should expose the person to the Benchers, it might prove his Ruine; I would know otherways how to prevent such base Tricks for the future. I am resolved to treat him as you advise.*

Ans^r. As Goodness ought to prevail with us sometimes, not to pursue Justice to the utmost Rigour, so, though this Man has justly deserved to be exposed, cancelling all Obligations of Friendship, or Respect, by the breach of his Trust; yet since 'tis probable the discovery of it would be no means to repair the Injury he has done you; that it is not so great but you may be able to sustain it without any considerable Damage, and that the exposing of him would be his utter Ruine, which would be a much greater Loss than yours; we think you had better agree the matter between your selves, only making him sensible that you forbear him upon such like Considerations, in hopes he will prove honest for the future; but that you shall be obliged to acquaint the World with it, if he serves any other person after the same manner. This may possibly prevent his acting so basely any more; And as for others, this Publick Account will give 'em some Reason to be cautious who they trust; and if you should ruine this Man, 'twon't prevent some from still acting Knavishly.

Quest. 8. *Which is hardest, to obtain Love, or preserve it?*

Ans^r. The Love of a fickle and foolish person is more easily got than kept; and that of the wise and constant is more difficultly gained than preserved, after once obtained. And therefore since the World is the most plentifully stocked with the first sort, we may conclude, for the generality 'tis more easie to procure than maintain it.

Quest. 9. *What is the Reason that many Fools beget strong and wise children?*

Ans^r. A Fool may have as strong and healthful a Body as a Wise Man, the Constitution of which does undoubtedly much conduce to the Disposition of the Child's Body: But the Gift of the Soul not being the Parents Act, or produced by him, it can be no farther influenced but by the Body of the Child, which being strong, vigorous and Healthful, is as likely to have its Organs proper and fit for the Functions of the Soul, as that of any other Body whatever.

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THE WORKS of the Right Honourable Henry late Lord Delamere, and Earl of Warrington, containing his Lordships Advice to his Children, several Speeches in Parliament, &c. with

many other Occasional Discourses on the Affairs of the two last Reigns. Being 32 Original Manuscripts Written with his Lordships own Hand; never before Printed. Printed for John Lawrence at the Angel, and John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, price bound 5 s.

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* * * *Bishop Barlows Remains*, containing near an hundred distinct subjects, Theological, Philosophical, Historical, &c. In Letters to several Persons of Honour and Quality, to which is added the Resolution of many abstruse points, as also Directions to a young Divine for his study in Divinity, and choice of his Library. Published from his Lordships Original Papers. Price bound 6 s. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

THE Ladies Dictionary, being a pleasant Entertainment for the Fair Sex; a Work never attempted before in English. The Design of this Work is universal, and concerns no less than the whole Sex of Men in some regard, but of Women so perfectly and nearly, that 'twill be serviceable to them in all their Concerns of Love, Marriage, Dress, Behaviour, Business, Life, Houses and Conversation. The Author throughout the whole Work intermixes abundance of Secret Occurrences with his other matter, and you may find here all the Humours of the Town at the bare expence of reading.—Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

* * * *Man made Righteous by Christ's Obedience*: Being two Sermons at Pinners-Hall with Enlargements, &c. Also some Remarks on Mather's Postscript, &c. By Daniel Williams. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry.

* * * *The Second Volume of the French Book of Martyrs*, is now Publish'd in English, with Her Majesties Royal Priviledge, and ready to be delivered to the Subscribers. The Third and Fourth Volumes are also preparing for the Press, and comprehend (with the two Volumes already published) all the Martyrdoms, &c. that have been in France from the beginning of the Reformation there, down to this present time.

Many Gentlemen that were wont constantly to take in the Monthly Compleat Library, being now gone into the Country, 'tis designed that the Compleat Library for May, June, July and August, shall be Publish'd all together at the beginning of next Term.

LONDON, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, 1694